Computer News 80

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DEDICATED TO TRS-80 SUPPORT

Computer News 80 is dedicated to the support of TRS-80 computers, Model I,II,III, 4/4P and users who operate their computers using TRS-DOS, LS-DOS 6.3, or TRS-80 cassette based systems.

Since third party support, along with 80 Micro has dropped their TRS-80 support, and because there are a lot of computer users out there who do not plan on giving up their Model 4 and older computers, we are publishing this news letter in support of all those who plan to continue to use their TRS-80 machines.

Most of the users of TRS-80 who will continue to use their machines, are individuals and small business people who have made a considerable investment in their equipment and software for particular operations in their home and business. Just because the industry has newer and possibly better computers using MS-Dos and other disk operating systems, there is no trend to replace costly equipment, not to mention the cost of software on the shelf, by these users. Not at least until their machines are no longer usable or repairable.

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Many of these users may have, like us, several hundred dollars invested in single sided double density disks alone. While there are ways to convert your TRS-80 program application software to the new dos systems, but it is time consuming and if you farm it out expensive. Have you ever tried to sell your software packages with your computer hardware? You will find that it will bring next to, or nothing compared to the price you paid for it. There are some software publishers who claim that it is illegal for you to sell your software to a second party, (see editors note under copyright) even though you are selling it with the original equipment that you purchased it for. They claim you only had a license to use the software, and now that you are no longer using the software that it should revert back to the writer, but you don't see any offers to buy it back. What ever your position in this regard might be, you still will find it next to impossible to recoup the investment that you have in software once you decided that you can no longer can use it on the computer that you have selected for your use in the future.

For these reasons and many more Computer News 80 will endeavor to publish this monthly news letter in support of those application users who still continue to own and use Model I, II, III, 4/4P & 4D and all the other TRS-80 machines.

The articles will be slanted heavily to those who are not computer programers, but to those who are users of application programs. User help in the use of Super Scripsit, Visacalc, and PFS:file will be featured, along with many other application program.

In short we are taking the TRS-80 computers from the Model 4D marketed today and looking back over our shoulder in support of all the computers that are still in use today, but no longer sold by Tandy, or are no longer supported by the magazines that only report current industry tends.

Remember these are the same people who

told us how good the computers were and how great the operating systems were and how great the application programs would be if we only bought them. Well we bought and bought! Now they tell us that we are old hat, not up to date and out of step.

But we say "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" and till my application outgrows the machine I have, I don't need the latest model. And maybe, just maybe, the model that I have now might be a little better, and a little easier to use, than the new latest super versions being produced by the clone industry.

There is a question and answer column, in each edition. So send in your questions, we will endeavor to answer them or find some user out there that has the answer.

We have a very large and qualified technical staff and your questions will be referred to them, sorry no phone calls please. We will however publish your questions and the answers in the Open Forum or reply to your individual questions by mail.

When writing please be as specific as you can. We need to know what machine you are using, what DOS you are operating under and the program version number that you are using when experiencing your problems.

We have some of the finest, most experienced technical staff available. Not only are they experienced in programing, but they include people who are experienced in the application of programs used daily in business and the home. They also include marketing and business consultants, along with housewives and hobbiest for fun and games, we don't expect that too many people out there are having problems with fun and games, but we might know of some new games that may be more fun."

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PFS:file AND LS-DOS 6.3 ON THE MODEL4

There are several problems in using PFS:file with the new LS-DOS 6.3 disk operating system. If you want to create a program disk that operates like the original PFS:file program/system disk that can be removed from the computer after boot up, and by using only the data storage disk in drive 0, you need to create a minimum system disk for each data storage disk that you use for storing PFS:file data files and which will have the ability to date the directory past 1987.

You could of course eliminate the date option from the systems disks and continue to use the program without dating the directory.

If you have previously created PFS:file data files, using the PFS:file program/system disk and disk drives only to create the data files and you want to install them on your hard drive that has been updated with LS-DOS 6.3, here is one way that you can do it.

Boot up your hard drive using your LS-Dos 6.3 hard boot disk. Place your PFS:file program/system disk in any drive, and at LS-DOS Ready, type the command FILE then ENTER. This will set up the PFS:file program in memory and use the DOS system that has been installed on the hard drive. You can then remove the PFS:file program disk, or leave it in. New data files that are created on the hard drive or disk drives will have the correct date on them, past Jan. 1, 1988.

If you create additional new data files using just your floppy disk PFS:file program/system disk, without your hard drive turned on, they will not be dated past December 31, 1987, or will show the date as 1980 as a default. But you can move the new PFS:file data file to the hard disk, and that will update it. Copy the PFS:file data files to the hard drive, using either the Copy mode of PFS:file (Option 3 on the menu) or by using the TRS-DOS copy command.

You will not have to use the command DATECONV to update the directory on the hard drive with the data files on it, as this is done during the copy process.

This seems to cause no problems in data loss and your PFS:file program does not have to be placed on your hard drive, unless you want to have it there or have already placed it on your hard drive.

Minimum System Disks for PFS:file

The following is the method of creating a PFS:file system disk that will operate when taken out of drive zero, just like the original system/program disk. But it must have minimum system disks created to store

data on, not just formatted disks for data storage.

1. Boot up the computer using LS-DOS 6.3, then using DISKCOPY make a backup of a "backup working copy" of the PFS:file program/system disk. (DISKCOPY will by-pass the copy protection on your working copy. Do not use your original PFS:file disk, because it has a limited number of copies available.)

2. Do the system disk update provided by LSI for LS-DOS 6.3 on page one of their instructions.

3. Rebuild Sysgen File, using appendix D-5 of your, PFS:file manual. (If you do not have the latest version of this manual, Radio Shack systems support will send you one, or send us a SASE and we will send you a copy.

4. Create data disks using the minimum system. Using the instructions for minimum system diskette page D-2 of Appendix D, PFS:file manual, with the following exception.

When step #4 has been reached, you should at that point place the data disk that you are creating in drive #1 and put a full system disk in drive #0 in order to have the proper system files present to execute the "system" type commands in step #4.

When you reach the typed entry in step #4, type the command SYSGEN (DRIVE=1), instead of just SYSGEN.

Now the data disk should be ready to use with the updated program disk removed from your drive #0 as always.

This seem like it might be a lot of trouble but it does speed up the entry of data over having to leave the program disk in the drive all the time. or switching back and forth from drive to drive during use.

As suggested, once one new working data disk is set up, use DISKCOPY to create several more disks to use for data storage, so that you do not have to go through the building of a minimum system disk, be sure to add to your store of minimum system data disks prior to adding data to the last one.

PFS:file and LS-DOS 6.3 on two disk drives
The only way we could get the PFS:file, version 01.00.00, program disk to work with the new LS-DOS 6.3, on the Model 4, without creating minimum system data disks, is to leave the LS-DOS system disk in drive 0 and type the command FILE with the PFS:file disk in drive one, then we could remove the PFS:file program from disk drive one and use disk drive one to store data on a data disk. But we had to leave the LS-DOS 6.3 system disk in Drive Zero or we were without a system. This method seems like it is more sensible than creating several minimum system data storage disks, if you only have a two disk drive system.

Because you can not use the TRSDOS COPY command to place PSF:file programs from a backup working disk copy, on your hard drive, you must use the original limited copy program disk of the PFS:file. Each time you use it it eats up one of the five available copies that you can make. Tandy will replace the original disk when you run out, but it may take several weeks to a couple months to get your new one.

By using the DISKCOPY of LS-DOS 6.3, you can make as many copies of a "working backup copy" as you want. Thus saving your original available copies for use on your hard drive, or future backups.

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COPYRIGHT
The Copyright Law was amended in 1980 to permit computer programs to be copyrighted. The amendment also provides that you, as the owner of a copy of a copyrighted program, are authorized to make copies of the program if you need to do so in order to use the program properly, or for archival and backup purposes.

The law also states that you may transfer (give, sell, lease, etc.) a copy of the program to someone else only - if you transfer all of your copies and rights to the program. In other words you cannot keep a copy for your own use, and give a copy of it to someone else. You can provide a copy of your material to another for the purpose of assisting you in the use of your program, such as giving a copy to a consultant to assist you in your understanding and use of the application in the program.. The main purpose today of the copyright protection laws are to prevent the commercial use and sale of copyrighted material, be it

programs, books, records, or any other reproducible material.

(Editors Note: Don't depend on this article or any other to explain or defend the copyright status, if you have a copyright problem, see a lawyer who specializes in copyright law.)

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INTO 1988 AND BEYOND
LS-DOS 6.3 AND ?

Some times we find ourselves so close to the chip that we can't see the bytes.

Bill Schroeder, President of Logical Systems Inc. and his staff at Grand Junction, Colorado have been taking a lot of flack on their policy of requesting that you buy one LS-DOS operating system for each computer that you plan on using it on. Some of the flack has been taken gracefully and some has not, and we were one of the first to raise a lot of that flack.

When the new updated system was announced back in January or so of this year we immediately sent in our order, which arrived in short order and because the thought was, well it is only a patch to up grade our existing TRS-DOS system disks to give us the new dating, it was put on the shelf for several months without even reading the manual. Typical right! I don't really need it now, but I want it, so I'll get around to it one of these days. We have several application programs on the shelf right now that are in that same category, which are waiting to see the light of the day.

We have two Model 4s in the office that are used daily and a third that we rent if we have problems with one of our work stations. These Model 4s go 8 hours a day every day, and more hours, and more days more times than not.

About the time I decided to dust off the LS-DOS 6.3 package, it was the middle of July and we were having a heat wave. Because we publish several weekly newsletters with weekly deadlines it was no time to be experimenting. But I did. I installed the new LS-DOS 6.3 system on one machine. Well not really. What I did do was upgraded my existing system disks for our Superscripsit programs. One for correspondence and one for the weekly publications. I was still thinking in terms that this was just a patching tool.

I think I updated the Visacalc program disk too, at that time. Its still updated, but not used very much.

About that time we received the new SuperSCRIPSIT update version 1.02, you know that complete program and system disk that was to end all the problems with the buggie, buggie older versions that were patched and repatched.

This new disk got the LS-DOS 6.3 treatment right away and was put to work.

Then for the next six weeks we worked overtime every week to reconstruct our weekly work! Just before putting the final touches to our weeks work for the weekly newsletters, the computer ate the text, or we had frozen paragraphs, or garbage text that could not be reconstructed even by cut and paste methods.

We went around in circles literally for several weeks trying to find out what was causing the problem. First the power supply went on one machine. That was fixed, then disk drive 0 decided to act up, but we had two machines and the data disks passed back and forth, and did the same things, so even if one machine was bad it couldn't be a hardware problem, right! It had to be a system and/or an application program problem.

We immediately went to Tandy support, on the frozen paragraphs. At the same time I was updating our subscription and mailing list files that we keep on PFS:file, and decided to update that with LS-DOS 6.3, and that didn't get beyond first stroke of the keyboard. But we had more important problems that were keeping us working late and having to come back on Saturday and Sunday to get our publications out. So the PFS:file problem was put on the back burner.

Just about that time I read the article by Hardin Brothers in 80 Micro, that reviewed part of the LS-DOS 6.3 where he mentioned the one machine one system policy, and its protection system, and that it could affect some data storage, (it couldn't and didn't but we didn't know that at the time). We called Logical Systems, and were really not assured that the protection system could not hurt our data, but that we needed to buy another system package, and if we

would send our original back, with the purchase price of one more they would key two systems disks alike. They couldn't answer any of my application problem questions, or wouldn't. I am sure that the person on customer service was really having a bad day, that day, but I was really having a worse day and a disaster of a week. Anyway, a long three page letter was immediately written, before the computer could eat that, it was sent to Bill Schroeder, President of Logical Systems, along with copies of data disks, system disks and program disk, with the message, Look what your system did!

I was surprised to get a phone call the same day that Bill got our package. Several other people got the same package the same day, including Tandy support group, Hardin Brothers, and others that I hoped could help us.

Bill, took the time to explain the system and that the protection system, if the disk was not tampered with, could in no way destroy any of our data, and even if we had used it on fifty machines, it would do no harm, except to occasionally flash a message that I was illegally using only one dos package on more than one machine. He also offered to send me two packages keyed alike, and if I found out that he was right, and was sure that our problems were not their fault that I could then send the payment for the second system package, or send the whole thing back to them and they would refund our original purchase price.

He also gave me several welcome tips on what could be causing our problems.

We were willing to try anything, so I passed over my irritation at the time about not getting the message of one package one machine when I bought the original.

We take great pride in the fact that all of our programs have been bought and paid for, and it supports those who write the programs and who we hope will support us in the use of the programs for years to come, while we are finding new ways to stretch, break, and bend their original intent.

While all this was going on we had to put our number one machine through Radio Shack repair station, three times, two weeks at a stretch, before it was finally running correctly. Number two machine was on the brink of going but we didn't know that at the time, fortunately for us it waited one week after number one was healthy again to have a power supply heart attack and die. Thank god for implants.

The reason in going into all of this is to point out the fact that while we were with out our number one machine for six weeks, and our number two machine for three more weeks, we were renting Model 4 machines from a local computer store to fill in and not once during that time did the LS-DOS prove out to be our data destroyer.

We have not yet solved the problem of frozen paragraphs locked into the text, that can not be removed from Superscripsit version 1.02, but we have solved the PFS:file compatibility, and as yet did not have any problems with Visacalc.

We sent in our payment for the second system disk, gladly, with apologies about our first irrational fears, and our publications have been going out on time, every week, with the normal amount of time and effort.

This brings me to some thoughts that we users tend to forget over time. If we are users who are not programmers and hackers, or real computer buffs, but just simple folk who use the computer in the course of helping us do our work, in our homes and businesses, we need the programers, and their support. With out them we would have nothing to work with, without many, many long hours of program writing to have anything at all to use as a tool for our work, with out even referring to the the long hours to learn to program in the first place!

We also tend to forget when we bought our first Model 4 from Radio Shack, there was included a TRS-DOS operating system disk, and a manual, and when we bought our second Model 4, there was a TRS-DOS operating system disk, and manual. These system cost were hidden in the price we paid for the computers, and we didn't think much about the fact we were getting two of the same disk operating system disks while getting two of the machines, but we did. I am sure that those of us with two machines or more, did not tell the store that we already had one of "those" (system disk and book) and that they could deduct it

from the price of the package for the machine.

In fact in the early years, of my experience I received a flyer from Radio Shack that they were having a sale on TRS-Dos Operating Manuals and I bought one, because I was really having trouble understanding the one that came with the machine and thought I was getting a "how to do-it book". I now have three TRS-DOS original disk operating system disks and three manuals, for two machines!

The nice thing that came out of my learning experience, was that the manual that I bought without the machine, had a hard disk drive manual for a Radio Shack hard drive, and a hard disk driver disk in it. I didn't have hard drive then, and a I learned something.

We have since added hard drives to each machine, not Radio Shack though, but if I ever do buy a Radio Shack hard drive, I would have to be rich to do so, I will at least have the driver on hand ready to go.

We might mention here that we installed LS-DOS 6.3 on the hard drives, per instructions and not one problem has been encountered. We have one fixed exterior hard drive, and one Konan 5 meg. cartridge exterior unit.

If Radio Shack sold me a disk operating system with each machine, why would I object to buying one each of the LS-DOS 6.3.

After all it is a complete operating system and not just patches, with many new and advanced operating programs built in.

We had the first knee jerk reaction to the "buy one for each machine" question, and that is, why should I buy one for each when I only need one system? That is true, but lets look at the market situation for a moment.

If we want to continue to use our Model 4s far into the future, we need the support don't we. Support costs money, and for the small amount of $39.95, for one operating system package, how long do we expect support to be supplied.

If someone ask me to spend, lets say $200.00, to keep my Model 4s running for the next five years, I would think that would be a bargain. I shudder to think of what the cost would be to replace all this equipment, not to mention software, and the special uses we have learned to put the programs and machines to doing for us.

LSI is selling a product to a deadend market, to start with. There are no more Model 4s or 4/Ps being produced, and the time for the Model 4D seems to be short.

I don't think that we can blame them for using a method of marketing that will allow them increased sales, up front, to pay for development time and advertising cost. Just to keep us Model 4 users in business a little longer.

I am sure that the majority of users, will buy only one package for their machine anyway. I am also sure that those with more than one machine will only buy one package once they find out there is no danger to data from using only one system package.

But lets be fair, if we want the support, we need to support those who are providing the service.

True, Radio Shack has turned us over to a third party for system support, because they no longer have an interest in selling the package, they say they will support the new operating system only where the support they supply applies to their application program packages that they have sold, and they have supported us in our change over and with all the problems we were having.

We have all gone to third party for application programs over the years, and if anyone should be held to blame for the current situation it is Radio Shack, for not supporting the Model 4s into the future by providing updates, or update patches for the TRS-DOS directly. So we can't blame the third party, in this case Logical Systems, Inc., remember they are really coming to our rescue. And they are providing much more than just a time patch.

I would much rather pay for one DOS package per machine, in the hope that LSI will be around to support us when we need their support in the future.

The other choices are the town dump for this equipment and a visit to the IBM compatible store. Even thinking about it

leaves me with a pain in the hip pocket, you know, the one we carry our wallets in.

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BOOK REVIEW

Recently I bought a book called Mod-4 by Jack©, it was the last one Discount Data in Plano, Texas had in stock. I didn't know this at the time and I had been seeing the ad for it for a long time. After I finally bought the book, I liked it so much that I called Discount Data to buy some more as Christmas gifts for a few users friends and found out that they were no longer in stock, and that they were no longer in print either. "We just sold the last one a couple weeks ago was the reply." A couple of weeks ago is when I ordered my copy.

What put me off from buying it before was a review in 80 Micro (August 1985, pg 114, by Mark D. Goodwin) that said "The books only reference to the TRSDOS job control language (JCL) states that the JCL is useful and that you should read the manual for more details." earlier he said " Jack's organization is identical to that of the Disk Systems Owner's Manual" by Tandy.

Having little use for the JCL, or as the review stated "Mod-4 by Jack doesn't provide any machine language programming information"

One comment in favor was "While missing some information, it is a good source for day-to-day needs." Well with a review like that - sorry Mr. Goodwin, we are not all programers and something simple might just be what I need.

With a lukewarm review like that and the put-down because it wasn't a programers guide to heaven, and because I had in my confusion bought duplicate material in book after book, I didn't buy one.

But what a surprise, I learned more in a few hours of just looking thru Mod 4 by Jack, than I had in years of reading the Tandy Disk Operators Manual.

Mod 4 is a 6 by 9 inch 218 page spiral bound book, that is very handy and at the side of my computer all the time now. It has thick card stock pages that will stand up to plenty of wear and tear, and has lots of space to write notes on the pages.

Its convenient size and layout gives fast simple explanations of DOS commands for TRS-80, with a short concise statement of what the command is all about. With examples of how to apply the command, with non technical examples.

The sequence of TRS-DOS and BASIC commands follows the Tandy Manual, but the explanation and examples are much more clearly written.

The first section is devoted to the explanation of TRS-DOS commands.

The second section is an Introduction to Basic statements, with an explanation of terms that anyone can understand.

Some examples:

<ENTER>	Means "I'm done with this line! Enter it into the mechanism now!
EDIT 100	Calls up the editor, puts line 100 in the editing buffer, and show "100" on the screen. You can then use the editing commands at this point.
EDIT.	The EDIT command followed by a period allows you to edit the last line edited, run, or somehow mentioned or used.

The next section explains Basic Terms, with examples.

STRING EXPRESSION	String expressions express information in the form of one or more characters "strung" together in strings of characters.
X$	X$ is a string of 1 or more characters.

JERRY	The name JERRY is a string. Many times it is shown or defined as a string by being enclosed in quote marks.
"JERRY" + "MARY"	Expresses string data in that the characters in "MARY" are combined with the characters in "JERRY" (by the + sign) to form a somewhat longer string.

The next section lists all the Basic Commands with clear definitions and examples.

The next section lists in numerical order all the Basic Error Messages, and what they mean.

TRSDOS Errors are listed on the back of this page the same way.

The next page has a cross reference chart of Character Codes, Dex, Hex, OCT, Binary, ASCII Abrv. and Keyboard

The next section contains this paragraph

JCL-JOB CONTROL LANGUAGE

"The normal office worker will never get into the JCL functions. Those interested individuals who want to delve deeper into the capabilities of the Model 4, however will soon discover that the JCL is a powerful as well as fascinating tool. The ideal of JCL is to setup routines, MACROS, to handle some specified operations with a minimum of easily entered commands. It is very similar to using MACROS with lotus 123 and other programs that use MACROS. Using JCL requires a fair amount of effort and time, but will surely reward those who pay their dues. Detailed instructions can be found in the Model 4 Owner's Manual. Some magazines articles have appeared that show some unique applications of JCL, and it seems a sure bet that whole books will shortly surface covering JCL in minute detail."

The next section explains, again in simple straightforward language SYSTEM FILES (/SYS)

"TRSDOS 6 for the model 4 is made up of a number of individual modules that are shuffled in and out of memory on an "as needed" basis rather than having all of the operating system in memory at all times. This has the effect of preserving a large amount of (RAM) memory for application programs. The implications pertain not only to volatile memory, but also to floppy (or hard) disk storage. By PURGEing or REMOVEing unneeded modules from your disk, you can streamline the disk to handle only those functions needed and free up more of the disk for potential applications."

"All of these files have the /SYS extension and are normally invisible on the directory listing"

"Note that it is possible to put needed SYSTEM files in high memory (using SYSRES) so that additional disk storage space can be opened up for other applications."

Followed by an explanation of what each TRSDOS file such as SYS4/SYS is used for and which ones you can safely remove if you are not using its function to make more room in your memory.

The next section shows the full list of "BUILT-IN TRSDOS PROGRAMS" with explanations. Such as MEMDISK, CLICK/FLT, COM/DRV, FORMS/FLT.

The next section is a Glossary of common computer terms in use, with explanations such as,

.password - An optional word used in protection schemes. It is made up of up to 8 characters, the first of which must be a letter. Note that a password is preceded with the period symbol.

And finally there is an 10 page index for cross referece.

We have covered just a little of what the book provides, and to have a small handy referece manual such as this within an arms reach has proved invaluable to us.

In the words of the immortal Mr. Remington Shaver, "we liked the book so much we bought the copyrights".

If you would like a copy, write to us as we may have enough interest to reprint it

about February or March. Price about $15.00 plus S & H.

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Book Reviews will be a regular monthly feature of our newsletter.

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RIBBONS AND RIBBON CLERKS

If you use a lot of ribbons like we do, or even just a few a year, you know that the cost of multi-strike ribbons are quite expensive to use up, unless you are writing a lot of finished product letters, otherwise most of us use nylon ribbons to get the most use out of the ribbon for draft work, and in-house use.

We use a Radio Shack DMP410 daisy wheel printer, and a DMP 130 dot matrix.

We have found that the lowest priced quality multi-strike ribbons can be purchased from the office supply mail order houses, Such as Reliable Corporation, or Quill Corporation rather than the Computer Supply Mail order houses. (We will make their addresses available at the bottom of this article).

Our last order from Quill Corporation was $3.82 each for six, even we don't buy more than six at a time, but could get a better price if we did. Many months they are on sale in there monthly sales catalogs.

Because we use a lot more nylon inked ribbons and they run anywhere from $7 ea. for the daisy wheel and $9 ea. for the DMP 130, we purchased a MAC INKER™ From Computer Friends® in Portland, Oregon, the universal inker sells for $68.50, and with one bottle of ink at $3.00 and shipping charges we invested about $80.00, but have re-inked all our nylon ribbons up to nine times now.

At a savings of $7 to $9 each, we made back the original investment within the first two months we had the inker.

Some users tell us they have gotten over 18 to 20 reinks on a ribbon and depending on how hard your printer strikes, the ribbons should last longer than that.

We did try buying replacement inked ribbons and replacing old ribbons in the cartridges, but we only saved a dollar or so over buying a new nylon cartridge and you have to have four hands to insert most ribbons.

They have some really exotic, inks too, like gold and silver, purple and orange, and can supply multi-color ribbon reinkers.

We also use their Mac-Switch in one application to switch printers from computer to computer. And it did fail after a few months of pretty hard switching, however their service department fixed it, no charge, and returned it to use by return mail.

If you have a Radio Shack DWP 410, any Ricoh Ribbon will fit, and so will the Ricoh Print Wheels, Quill sells these at $23.94 to 22.49 in quantity, and they can be mixed fonts to get the best price.

Both Quill and Reliable have good prices on other computer supplies and paper, but most of all they break their back with service, and no questions asked if you return an item.

Addresses:

Quill Corporation®
PO Box 5900
Lincolnshire, IL 60197-5900
312-634-8000

Reliable Corporation®
1001 W. Van Buren Street
Chicago, IL 60607
1-800-621-4344

Computer Friends®
14250 N. W. Science Park Drive
Portland, OR 97229
1-800-547-3303

(No we haven't turned the paper over and fed it through again, but sometimes when I think about it, it might not be a bad idea).

We will have many more money saving tips in future issues to help you enjoy your computing more. Such as office procedures, what is the best time to buy supplies and what is new on the market. Such as the Label Peeler™ at $29.95, can you believe it and you can make your own for about 50 cents. We'll put the directions for that one in next month.

A VISIT WITH DAVID GOBEN: PATCHES TO GO AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Over the past few years I have amassed and devised one of the largest single collections of TRS-80 patches ever. It never fails that no matter how good a product is; someone else always wants something different; a new feature; a CHANGE. Thus patches. And so it is that through this article, and perhaps, if you wish, a continuing column, that will hopefully help you out of a pinch.

First some history. When the Technical Department at 80 MICRO took over FEEDBACK LOOP from Terry Kepner, who was leaving to take charge of his purchase of PORTABLE 100 Magazine, I was contacted to aid in some SuperScripsit problems. Since then I have filled that column with several dozen fixes (some misprinted, but giving Mercedes Silver the 'credit', especially for those). That is why some of you who wrote to Mercedes got a letter from me instead.

I would like to take a moment and clarify my current position with 80 MICRO. I have already received numerous letters from TRSDOS users who have called me a traitor since I've started writing for MS-DOS, as is evident by the cover story of the December 1987 issue. You'll be shocked again in February. And later as well, as I have numerous article ideas in the works. It is not that I have abandoned the Z80 machines; it is only a matter of survival. How can I make a living by writing articles for a machine which the magazine no longer supports?

As Bob Dylan sang, 'The times are a-changing,' and they certainly are. If you feel outraged at the MS-DOS world encrouching on you, don't cry to me. I've already been through that hell myself, but in my case it was about 9 years ago. Back then I was happily computing on an Altair. This was an 8080-based system (the 8080 was the father of the Z80), and was the FIRST personal computer. But a thing called a TRS-80 invaded our turf, and took all our support from manufacturers and magazines away. For some time, I cursed the Tandy machine by calling it a TRASH-80. But you can either be a victim of change, or a participant in it. I chose to be a participant. Almost begrudgingly, I purchased a 16K Level II machine. Once I grew accustomed to this new environment (it seems harder than what it actually is when you get used to computing a certain way), I fell in love.

One thing I will forever attest to for the TRS-80 line: The operating system is the best and friendliest I have ever seen. You'll never see anything like it on mainframes, mini-computers, or those provided by Apple, Commodore, or IBM. As a matter of fact, I am working up plans for an LDOS environment for MS-DOS computers. Think it'll be worth it?

Anyway. The patches. These are for LS-DOS 6.3 and TRSDOS 6.2. The very first patch disables password checking, and so if you install it, you will not need to add the password extension on any of the other patches, which is SYSTEM for SYS files, and UTILITY for all the others. Due to column width, lines with a trailing percent sign '%' indicate a CONTINUATION of a single line. For example, patch # 1 actually resides on only ONE line. Remove the percent symbol and write the two lines as one.

1) Disable password checking. This patch removes the need to enter a file password to access a file:

```
P A T C H  S Y S 2 / S Y S . S Y S T E M  %
(D02,50=18:F02,50=28)
```

2) Boot up in all-caps. This patch will allow you to begin typing in upper-case after a boot-up. thus you never have to worry about first pressing the CAPS key:

```
PATCH SYS0/SYS (D00,80=20:F00,80=00)
```

3) Enable Drive 3 on boot-up:

```
PATCH BOOT/SYS (D02,84=C3:F02,84=C9)
```

Enable Drive 4 on boot-up:

```
PATCH BOOT/SYS (D02,8E=C3:F02,8E=C9)
```

4) Bypass printer I/O error counter. Normally the computer will wait 10 seconds, and then abort printer output if the printer isn't on-line. This is a bother if you are in the middle of changing a printer ribbon that just ran out. This patch will force the computer to wait until the printer goes back on-line:

```
PATCH BOOT/SYS (D0C,21=3E 08 EF FE %
80 18 04:F0C,21=C5 01 08 00 CD 82 03)
```

5) Allow DUMP to dump memory below X'3000':
PATCH SYS7/SYS (D13,D6=37 00:%
F13,D6=ED 42)

6) Speed up MemDISK formatting. If your MemDISK always formats without errors, then install this patch to drop several seconds from its formatting time:
PATCH MEMDISK/DCT (D06,78=18 0D:%
F06,78=3E FF)

7) Speed up file backups. If your drives are always maintained in good order (cleaned and alignment checked regularly), then installing this patch will bypass the VERIFY READ done by BACKUP. Use this patched version only with non-critical backups. Build a file called BU/FIX, and enter the following lines:
D12,E3=4B
F12,E3=49
D14,1E=4B
D14,1E=49
D14,43=4B
D14,43=49

Install the patch using PATCH BACKUP BU

8) If you wish to bypass master password checks during backups, include the following two patch lines into the above patch file:
D06,DA=00 00 00
F06,DA=CD 11 31

Well, that does it for this time around. In a future installment I'll provide you with patches to allow a more liberal date entry (no need for leading zeros for single-digit months and days), a patch to allow you to continue JCL processing even after the SYSTEM drive has been changed, and if space permits, a program that will allow you to change system drives, yet still maintain logical drive number order (drive :0 STAYS drive :0).

If you are in need of a patch for your Model I/III/4 system, or just some help on getting a (stupid) program to do what you want it to, please address them to this publication, and we'll see what we can do. Please include system information: Model number, memory, number and type of drives, operating system, and program name and its version number. Obviously we don't have all the programs, so if possible, include an original copy as a 'gift'. I will check your problem out, and destroy the information on the disk when I'm done (to protect copyrights).

— David Goben

(Editors Note: David Goben is an associate editor for 80 Micro, and author of many articles and programs for other publications. He is also a programming consultant who specializes in troubleshooting programs and writing utilities.)

Note* We will in future publications attempt to box program line listings so that the program lines will be printed in full length without the need for a column (%) break line.

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GLITCHED GREMLIN?
This subject was touched on briefly in a preceding article "INTO 1988 AND BEYOND...", but I have to know - is there anyone out there with a SuperSCRIPSIT 1.2, alias "Pac-Man" that gobbles text faster than you can hit CTRL-W or am I alone with a "Glitched Gremlin"?

First off, a little backgound, I have been using SS 1.1 for about 4 years, on a Mod 4, 64K, 2 disk drive with a 5-MEGA byte hard-drive, updated with the latest version of TRS-DOS 6.X as it became available.

The quirks I encountered with SS 1.1 were realized through the school of "Hard-Knocks", but I learned to live with them, much like having a tempermental car - it's all you've got and all you can get for the time being. SS 1.1 has it's DO's and DON'Ts or at least mine has. Here are some of my "DO's and DON'Ts" for the SS 1.1:

1. DON'T change header's or footer's on a previously written document that you are going to edit or you'll get "Please Wait A Moment" and never see the text again. You have to print it first (a couple of paragraphs will do) then edit the header's and footer's.

2. DON'T move a block of text, use Block Action Copy, recall the copy where you want to reposition the text, then edit the text at the new location, if necessary, then go back to the original block and delete it with F2 function key. For some reason the block move wants and does leave residue text at the old site and could present problems because you either miss it

(rendering the remaining text where you originally moved it from unintelligible) or discovered it and tried to delete it without any success.

3. DON'T Block Action Delete more than two pages plus a few paragraphs - more than this amount seems to be more than the program can handle. You'll get "Please Wait A Moment" - I'm still WAITING! On occasion hitting the BREAK key will bring you out of the Block Action function, but DON'T count on it! The two page plus limit also seemed to be a factor in Block Action Move or Copy.

4. DO use the ASCII function in SS and run text over to ASCII and back into a new SS file, when extreneous text creeps in. Try as I may to eliminate some extreneous text, all to no avail, the act of running the text into ASCII and back to a new SS file seemed to take out the wrong flags and I can then edit the text as needed.

Needless to say I was delighted to hear about SS 1.2! At Last, I could hang up the kid gloves and use all the functions that I had so carefully avoided before.

The new SS 1.2 disk arrived, a complete new program and system disk with TRS-DOS 6.2.1, not just a patch, but a whole new program. I immediately made my backup's, and set up our issue format on a working disk copy, updated the hard-drive to TRS-DOS 6.2.1, took the text written under SS 1.1 and Compressed it using the SS 1.2 (this is a prerequisite to editing any old text on the new SS 1.2), I was off and running! I could use Block Action Delete for more than two pages - It Didn't Hang-Up! I could use Block Action Move and edit the text - Works Great! I can type fast and the computer is right there, responding, waiting for more - Hey, THIS, IS, GREAT!! (A little more background: The text I enter, edit, delete, and add to, is in date sequence, written in a specific style about 15 lines in length per entry. Hence old dated entries are deleted from the beginning of the text and notices of interest are deleted from the bottom. New text is inserted into the body or at the bottom of the old text using the F1 and F2 function keys where needed. The finished text now contains new and old entries in proper date sequence.) I do all the necessary work to insert new entries, move a block to change a date and evidentually arrive at the bottom of the issue - THIS 1.2, IS, REALLY, GREAT!! I then hit SHIFT-ARROW UP, then CTRL-Q, then "E" - make a backup of what I have just finished. Go back into the original text at the top of the file and begin the paging sequence.

DOWN ARROW-P - add necessary lines, put in page nmber - GOING GREAT!
...Hit DOWN ARROW-P, look at the bottom of the screen - "End of File Encountered" -W?H?A?T?! I'm on page FOUR of a 30 PAGE ISSUE!

What in the world is that text on page 4? Looks like part of the text on PAGE 30! RELAX, don't PANIC!

Go to the top of text - use DOWN ARROW-N, insert a page number beyond page 4 -
WHOWEE, I have page 6 - so what's this "End of File Encountered" at page 4?!
Go to top of text - scroll down - seems to have some garbled text - well, I'll just use F2 and take it out -

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? "Can't Delete Frozen Paragragh"? I DIDN'T FREEZE ANYTHING!!

Use Block Action - Mark Block - Use Freeze function with option to UNfreeze - done.

Now I'll use F2 and get the garbage out - "Can't Delete Frozen Paragragh" - OH, NO! I have a dead-line! This CAN'T be happening! Calm down! It's summer the temperature is fast approaching 80 degrees - That must be It! Shut down the computer, set the alarm for 4AM, try again in the morning.

4:30AM next morning, twelve hours to press time. OH, MY, GOD, it still WON'T work!

Well, I'll use the ASCII trick - done!
UH, OH, still can't get the garbage out! I know, I'll copy what is good text to a new SS file and type in the missing text - done!

Where are those KID GLOVES!? careFUL! NO sudden moves - got it - now it's paged - it's printed - it's out!

I thought possibly by having used the old text from SS 1.1 something had been carried over. So, I proceeded to retype (all thirty pages) the text using SS 1.2 - this proved to

be a futile effort. I still encountered the same problems. On one occasion, while at the end of the text, using SHIFT-ARROW UP, I received "Please Wait a Moment" and lost the entire text. I DO make frequent back-up's, and always have a hard copy of last weeks issue, but that can still leave you with four hours of nerve wrecking work do! I have also tried purging MOVE/CTL from drive:0, thinking the carry over was coming from the MOVE/CTL file after a Block Copy, Move, etc. - this didn't seem to make any difference one way or the other.

Solution: Since then (six unholy weeks worth!) I have gone back to my tempermental SS 1.1; had a new power pack put in my computer; updated to LS-DOS 6.3; and ordered a new SS 1.2 disk.

No, I didn't call Tandy, somebody else did - I was too hot! I have also received a working copy of SS 1.2 from a concerned individual. No, I haven't tried it - but I will, when the bad memories of the whole experience have had a chance to recede into the dark corners of my gray matter. No, I haven't got the replacement disk yet from Tandy - boy, are they slow.

Am I alone with the "Glitched Gremlin" or do I have company? If I'm alone then it's back to the drawing board (I must remember to remove all sharp objects and heavy blunt instruments from the room). If not, maybe Tandy is working on the problem and this is why I haven't received a new SuperSCRIPSIT 1.2 disk?

- Ron Gatlin

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WINTER DREAMS

Outside the wind is blowing up a windchill factor of minus 30 degrees. But here I sit all cozy and nice in front of the warm, crackling, flashing glow of my computer. Oh, how I wonder if an amber screen wouldn't be a little bit warmer!

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NEW COMPUTERS WITH BUGS

We recently read of where a user went into a Radio Shack and bought a new computer and when he got it home he found that it had a big bug in it, so he immediately returned the computer to the store. After killing the big ugly bug that had taken up residence inside the computer. It wasn't said how much the bug ate before being squashed by the new owner.

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NEWS ITEMS

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LS-DOS 6.3

After January the LS-DOS 6.3 system operating disk should be available through Radio Shack stores express order service. According to Logical Systems, Inc.

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There has been an unconfirmed report that Tandy will have a Block-Buster sale in January of 1988, in which they are going to sell the Model 4D, at half price. With the current retail listed in the Tandy catalog of $1199 this would place the sale price at $599.50

It was reportedly not a move on Tandys part to drop the Model 4D from the line but that it was so far over priced in their 1987 catalog that they could extend a 50% discount instead of a 20% or 30% and still have a good profit left.

Time will tell, but in the past every time they offered a 50% discount on a machine or printer, that was the last to be seen coming out of the plant.

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LS-Dos 6.3 extends a one owner user license regardless how many computers you are going to use the system disks on, for a fee of $99.00 with full credit on all previous disks that you bought. This we suspect is to over come all the howling about "one disk-one machine". At this price it would work out that if you have 2.478 machines or more you should buy the $99.00 deal.

But they still claim that their "mystery key" will not destroy any data, and your computer will not go up in smoke, originally we were told that if you used the system disk on the first machine, that sooner or later the screen on the second, third, or fourth computer that was booted with the disk would flash "YOU ARE A THIEF" on the screen. But that it wouldn't damage your data, or your computer. We haven't seen that happen yet and we still like the program. But we are beginning to wonder if we really had to buy the second disk to remain legit. It may just be a "phantom key" after all. We believe in supporting the producers of the products we use to the fullest, but we want to be sure that what we are told is not just an effort to sell more product.

What's worse, piracy of software, or false claims about software.

The honest user is left caught in the middle.

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OPEN FORUM

Send your questions and problems to the Open Forum, a regular feature of Computer News 80 providing for the exchange of information for our readers.

We have a very large and qualified technical staff and your questions will be referred to them, sorry no phone calls please. We will however publish your questions and the answers in the open forum and reply to your individual questions by direct mail.

When writing please be as specific as you can. We need to know what machine you are using, what DOS you are operating under and the program version number that you are using when experiencing your problems.

Questions that our technical staff can not answer will be published, so that our readers will be able take a crack at it.

We will also advise you as to who the proper manufacturer or software publisher is that could be of help.

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Q: How do I convert data from a PFS:file data disk to Super Scripsit version 1.01.
L. B. - Denver, CO

A: There are two ways to send data from a PFSfile data disk to Super Scripsit. Because a Super Scripsit file wants to read file length in 256 only.

One, you could create an ASCII file by printing from the PFS:file data disk to a file on disk. Under option 5, print to *Disk (file Name:drive number) this will create an ASCII file with the same file length as the PFSfile data disk, and it has to be sent to another file with 256 line length.

Take the file that you have printed to from PFS:file and make a backup to a second file using the command:

Copy ASCII FILE NAME TO NEW ASCII FILE NAME space .(LRL=256)

This will create a new ASCII file, with line length of 256.

Then use the SuperScripsit Menu selection A to covert the new ASCII file to a SuperScripsit file.

Have patience and wait for the file to be converted under Menu A, it takes a while.

Or you could, write patch SuperScripsit so it accept variable LRL's.

The following works on version 1.1x SuperScripsit on the Model 4

PATCH SCRIPSIT/CTL (X'6F31'=E5 21 7C % 00 CB C6 E1)

PATCH SCRIPSIT/CTL (X'6F38'=C3 8F 54)

PATCH SCRIPSIT/CTL (X'5450'=31 6F)

Remove the % mark when typing the patch, as it indicates only the column width, and type the patch as a complete line.

Always use a backup program disk to install your patches on and test out your patched disk before using on your main disks. A mistyped patch can wreck your favorite program disk before you know it. And be a job to correct if you are inexperienced in programing. However it is simple if you get the patch wrong the first time on a backup disk, you just format the disk and start over again, being a more careful typist.

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Q: The top of form command which is clear > in my SuperScripsit 1.1 program does not work at the bottom of the page on line 60 or 66 as shown in the manual. It will work if the command is embedded in the page somewhere above line 60, with the second page set off like the manual indicates.
T. S. - St. Louis, MO

A: We don't have an answer for that one, maybe some one out there does. But we are researching it and will let you know what we find out as soon as we can.

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Q: Do you have a simple program I could write to set my DMP Printer with out

having to type the printer commands each time.
T. P. -Albuquerque, NM

A: The simple way is to write a short Basic program for each pitch you want.
Sample:
for 10 pitch:
while in basic write,

new
10 LPRINT CHR$(27)CHR$(19)
20 SYSTEM
30 END
SAVE TO "PITCH10":drive number

Then when your DMP130 printer is on, and you are still in TRS-DOS type Basic Pitch10, to call up the program which will enter basic, set the printer and return to the system.

for 12 pitch:
new
10 LPRINT CHR$(27)CHR$(23)
20 SYSTEM
30 END
SAVE "PITCH12":drive number

Check your printer manual for the printer codes to be inserted ** in the command line CHR$(27)CHR$(**). And you don't have to type the quotation marks while you are in the TRS-DOS mode, just type BASIC space and the program name you want.
i.e. BASIC PITCH12

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To the users group president who wrote that he thought that the use of a question and answer column, was in his words "Our club's observations are that a Q & A section benefits a very narrow segment of readers while at the same time taking up a lot of space in a publication"
W. B. - Independence, MO

A: While it may take up space to answer subscribers questions, we feel that it is important to do so, and will publish the questions and answers that would be of the most interest to all, the others we will answer directly.

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COMMENTS FROM OTHERS

"I'm very interested in TRS-80 support."

"Since 80 Micro is dropping the Model one support - and I've just got a model I Level 2, 48K, I will need a source of information & help."

"I have a TRS-80 III and need a source of information for the same."

"I have a TRS-80 Model 4, and need help!"

"I am one of the TRSDOS users who have been recently abandoned by 80 Micro magazine (where I saw your classified ad) and am in search for something (anything) to fill the void. If I like what I see in your publication, my check for a full year's subscription will be forthcoming."

Q: "Am working under LDOS 5.1.3. Do you have a patch for date after 1987, enclosed is a check for one years subscription."
F. W. MD, Springfield, NJ

A: Michael Jacobs Consulting
PO Box 552, Station K, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2G9, phone 416-489-1403, has a shareware patch program disk that sells for $14.95 plus $3.00 shipping called SIX2XTND That patches the TRS-DOS 6.2.x on Model 4. and DATECOV date conversion for many data disks created under TRS-DOS 6.2.x, LS-DOS 6.3, LDOS 5.3, DOSPLUS 1.0. He also says he has LDOS 5.1.4 versions for the Model I and Model 3.

Delivery takes several weeks because it comes thru US customs. Find a friend that has a copy and copy it, because it is shareware. If you do use it send the author $15.00. Lets be fair. If you don't like what you see, destroy the data on the disk.

Misosys Inc. PO Box 239, Sterling, VA 22170, Phone 703-450-4181, has a program for updating LDOS 5.1.4 version to LDOS 5.3, Model III or Model 4 operating in the Model III mode. for $24.95 (+S&H). You may have to upgrade to LDOS 5.1.4, but if it is a complete system disk, you should not have to do anything but date convert your existing data disks, and run the new system version, as you do with LS-DOS 6.3.

80 Micro BBS, 603-924-6985, has a patch under the file name Datefix.DOC, by Mike Zarowitz with a patch that can be downloaded, to extend TRSDOS to the year 2000.

Has anyone else written or developed date extensions for the TRS-80? Let us know.

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